

Message Text

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46

ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 LAB-06 EB-11 COME-00 PRS-01

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6267

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ILO

SUBJECT: WCL RECONSIDERING ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE EAST-WEST TRADE

UNION CONFERENCE AT THE ILO

REF: EC BRUSSELS 0203

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO WCL ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
NGUYEN VAN TANH, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE WORLD CONFEDERATION
OF LABOR MAY NOT ATTEND THE JANUARY 19 EAST-WEST MEETING AT
GENEVE IF THE ICFTU DOES NOT PARTICIPATE. HE SAID WCL GENERAL
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SECRETARY JEAN BRUCK WAS TO MEET WITH ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY

OTTO KERSTEN ON JANUARY 16 IN GENEVA TO DISCUSS THE ICFTU'S POSITION. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE WCL HAD DECIDED TO DEEMPHASIZE ITS POLICY OF CULTIVATING CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE WFTU FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. INDICATIONS THAT THE ICFTU AND THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) WILL NOT ATTEND THE EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONFERENCE AT GENEVA COULD LEAD TO A WCL DECISION ALSO NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING. ACCORDING TO NYUGEN VAN TANH, A MAJORITY OF WCL SECRETARIAT MEMBERS FEARS THAT WCL ATTENDANCE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ICFTU COULD FURTHER JEOPARDIZE THE EFFORTS OF THE WCL'S EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION (EO/WCL) TO NEGOTIATE AFFILIATION WITH THE ETUC, AND ADVERSELY AFFECT THE INCREASINGLY POSITIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WCL AND THE ICFTU.

3. NGUYEN VAN TANH ALSO TOLD US THAT THE WCL HAS DECIDED TO "COOL-OFF" ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WFTU FOR ESSENTIALLY THE SAME REASONS GIVEN ABOVE. HE CITED THE DECISION OF THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LAST NOVEMBER TO ONCE AGAIN SET ASIDE THE EO/WCL'S BID FOR AFFILIATION WITH THE ETUC AS A MANIFESTATION OF GROWING CONCERN AMONG ETUC MEMBER UNIONS, PARTICULARLY THE SCANDINAVIANS, OVER WCL RELATIONS WITH THE WFTU.

4. COMMENT. MANY ETUC LEADERS BELIEVE EO/WCL MEMBERSHIP IN THE ETUC WOULD PROVIDE THE SOVIETS A "FRIEND IN COURT" AND THIS COULD EVENTUALLY FACILITATE A SOVIET BID FOR ETUC AFFILIATION. EO/WCL GENERAL SECRETARY JEAN KULAKOWSKI IS APPARENTLY AWARE OF THIS AND RECENTLY SENT LETTERS TO THE PRINCIPAL SCANDINAVIAN TRADE UNION CENTERS IN AN EFFORT TO ALLAY THEIR FEARS IN THIS REGARD. IN ANY EVENT, THE DECISION THE WCL TAKES WITH RESPECT TO PARTICIPATION IN THE JANUARY 19 GENEVA MEETING WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT.
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